# SLATE – A Tool for Sustainable Livelihoods AsseT Evaluation

## Background

Blah blahblah

## Acknowledgements

Financial support

Testing of initial version: Amare, Tesfaye, Kulumsa staff.

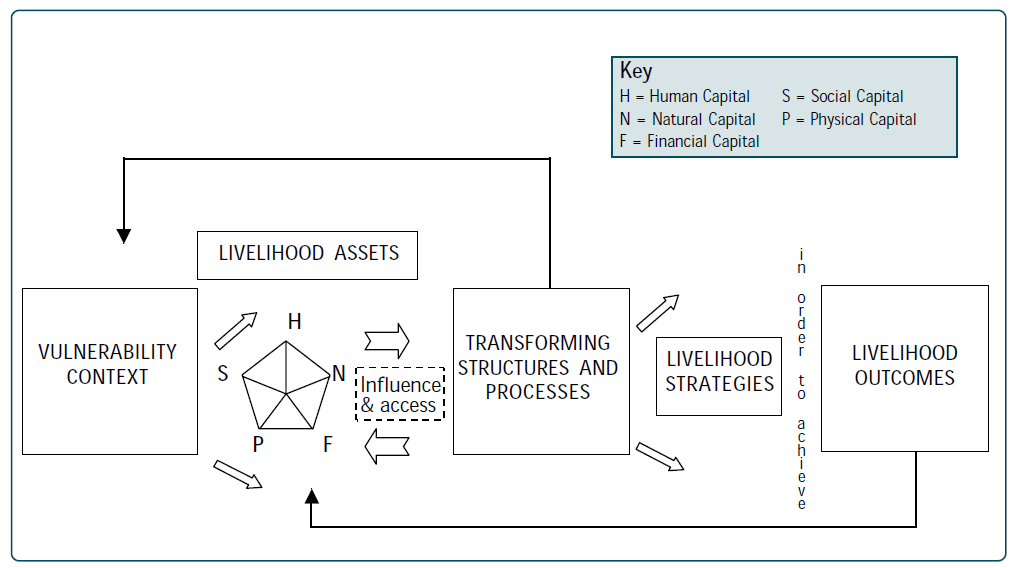
Participants in FEAST (Jane et al.)

Eleanor Allen for assistance with some of the post-SLATE analyses.

## An Introduction to the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

### What is the sustainable livelihoods approach?

The Sustainable Livelihoods (SL)approach is a way of thinking about scope, priorities and objectives for development. It allows us to identify the range of assets and options open to households and, by doing so, to get a clearer idea of the constraints faced by and opportunities available to them. By concentrating, from the start, on the range of different assets that are accessible to farm households, it ensures that all the different dimensions of the development problem being addressed are covered. A summary of the SL framework is shown in the diagram below. The most important parts for this project are highlighted in green, namely the livelihoods capital assets and the vulnerability context.



### What are the Livelihood Capital Assets

Dividing the different capital assets that households may or may not have access to, into different categories allows us to gather more focused information on the constraints and opportunities that are relevant to them. The five types of capital asset, denoted by the pentagon in the diagram above and used in the SL approach, are:

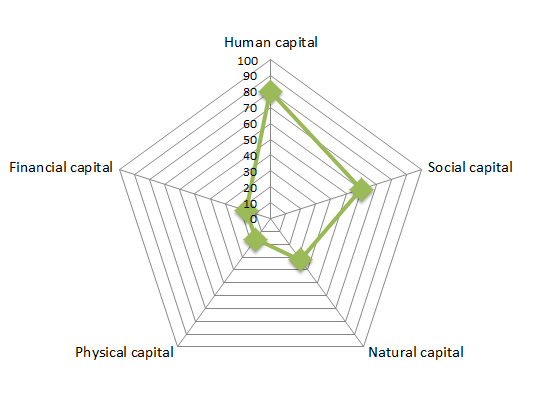
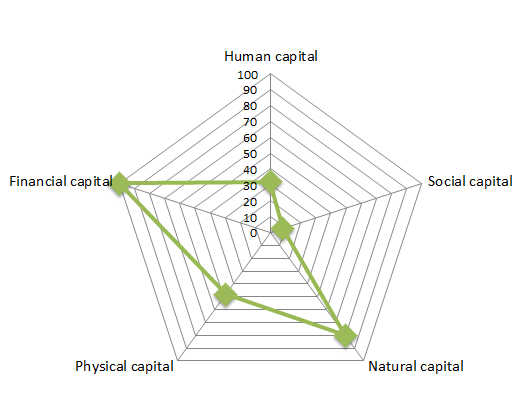
* Human – skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives. At a householdlevel human capital is broadly a factor of the amount and quality of labour available.
* Natural–natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services (e.g. nutrient cycling, erosion protection) useful for livelihoods are derived
* Financial–financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives (includes capital and income for the purposes of the livelihoods analysis)
* Physical–basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods (roads, shelter, milk collection plants etc.).
* Social–the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives. Includes family, other social, commercial networks etc., membership of formal organisations (cooperatives etc.)

### What is the Livelihoods Pentagon

The pentagon is a way of presenting the outcome of a livelihoods assets analysis in a way that makes it easier for the reader to identify the different dimensions of a particular household’s (or community’s) livelihood status; i.e. their overall livelihoods capital asset endowment.

The two example pentagons presented below illustrate this for two contrasting livelihood strategies.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Small-scale commercial poultry** | **Resource poor subsistence** |



## How do we make use of the livelihoods assets

There are many ways in which a livelihoods analysis can be conducted. For this project we in

## How will this project make use of the livelihoods approach?

## Why is this approach especially useful for this project?

Way of identifying household types whose opportunities and problems differ. We can then target solutions more effectively.

The different shapes of the pentagons illustrate, amongst other things, how the more commercialised enterprise is likely to be much more dependent on continuing financial inputs. For the subsistence farmer, human capital is likely to be the more important asset. Although natural capital is also important to the subsistence farmer, access to natural resources is often constrained so, as is the case in the diagram, the capital asset score may be quite low. In this way, the pentagon illustrates a potential development problem for this type of household that a project would need to address. You might want to try interpreting some of the other issues that these two pentagons highlight …

### Identifying indicators to assess household livelihoods capital assets

To assess capital asset endowments (as we have done with the pentagons above), we normally need to identify a set of relevant indicators for the communities that we are working in. This will be the first step that we will take in this project. Some examples of indicators for each of the capital assets are:

* Human – education level, birth rates, family size, number of children in school.
* Natural–water resources, access to forest land, touristic resources, capacity to make farm yard manure.
* Financial–Access to markets, grants from aid organisations, availability of off-farm income.
* Physical–Crop storage facility, quality of house construction, ownership of radio.
* Social–Land tenure systems, marriage practises, sharing of labour amongst households.

It is important that we identify indicators that are relevant to each community. We would normally do this in a group situation with community members. For this project,the first step in the field work will be to gather a group of farmers in the target community who will help us to identify a range of relevant indicators for that community.

### Scoring individual households for livelihoods capital assets

After we have completed the group work, we will have identified a complete set of capital asset indicators that are relevant to the community as a whole. The next step in the SL analysis is to use the indicators to assess the asset status of a sample of individual households. To do this, we need to conduct individual interviews with representative householders. We need to ask the householder to score his own household against two criteria for each of the identified indicators:

**Weight** (0 to 10) – how relevant is this indicator to the household when compared with all the other indicators. For example, the indicator *access to markets* will be relatively unimportant to a family that only sells a small proportion of their produce. In this case it may score just 2 or 3 for weight. A truly subsistence household would score 0.

**Ranking** (-5 to +5) – how much does this indicator contribute to or compromise the household’s livelihood. Extending the previous example, even though a household may not market a lot of what it produces, the cash that is generated by sales is potentially an important contributor to household livelihoods. In this case, the access to markets indicator would be ranked highly (perhaps 4 or 5) even though the weight for relative importance is quite low. If the indicator is perceived as having a negative impact on livelihoods (e.g the nature of current *land tenure systems* disadvantages the household being interviewed) it should be scored in the range -1 to -5.

### What about the vulnerability context?

One novel aspect of this new project is that we will try to look at vulnerability, as it relates to livelihood assets, in a bit more depth. By vulnerability, we basically mean, how much can households rely on the assets that they now have access to still being available to them in the future. In this sense it is a bit like sustainability but we are looking at more specific issues that may threaten a household’s capacity to sustain alivelihood. In this sense, vulnerability encompasses future risks to the household’s livelihood.

As this is a new area for us in our implementation of the SL approach, we are likely to modify this somewhat as we proceed. However, the basic idea will be to score our livelihoods indicators for vulnerability as well as the current asset endowment. At present, we are proposing to score the householder perceptions of vulnerability in relation to the individual asset indicators (as described above) using the following simple scale:

**-1** – the impact of this indicator on livelihoods is likely to get worse in future. For example, the water table in the area is perceived to be dropping and rainfall events are becoming less predictable so *access to water resources* is a vulnerable indicator and we would score it at -1.

**0** – the householder does not envisage any change in the risks associated with this indicator in the short to medium terms. For example, if *birth rates* in the village have been stable for several decades and there are no reasons to anticipate changes then this indicator would score 0 for vulnerability.

**+1** – the impact of this indicator is likely to improve in future. For example, the government is undertaking a road rehabilitation programme in the area so access to markets is likely to improve and would be scored +1 for vulnerability.

At a later date we may decide to extend this scoring scale somewhat if we find it does not give us clear answers. This will be something that we will try to discuss with householders as we carry out the individual interviews.

### What will we do with the livelihoods analysis?

The main aim of conducting a livelihoods assessment for this project is to allow us to identify a set of different household types. Our argument is that household types – that have been differentiated according to their livelihood assets – would need to be supported in different ways by the feed related interventions that the project will identify for its target communities. The livelihoods approach allows us to come up with a household type classification that covers the whole range of farmers’ constraints, opportunities and objectives. We can also complete it quite rapidly and at a relatively low cost. Because the indicators we use to do this are derived by members of the target community the SL approach is are more likely deliver relevant household characterisations than many other approaches. When we have completed this exercise, we will use its findings as a basis for an analysis of feed resource availability and use and specific options for improving this, within each household type.

### Further Reading on Sustainable Livelihoods

The UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) has produceddetailed guidance sheets describing the SL approach and its implementation. You can download these from:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/dossiers/livelihoods-connect/what-are-livelihoods-approaches/training-and-learning-materials>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is SLATE?

SLATE is a tool to assist in collecting and initial interpretation of livelihood assets data for the purposes of community characterisation.

### Who can Use SLATE?

SLATE is made freely available under a ????licence. It is anticipated that it will be used mainly by social and natural scientists in agricultural or natural resource related disciplines who wish to analyse and manage communities in which they may be engaged.

## How is SLATE structured

### Elements of a SLATE analysis

### Glossary of Terms

## How to Use SLATE

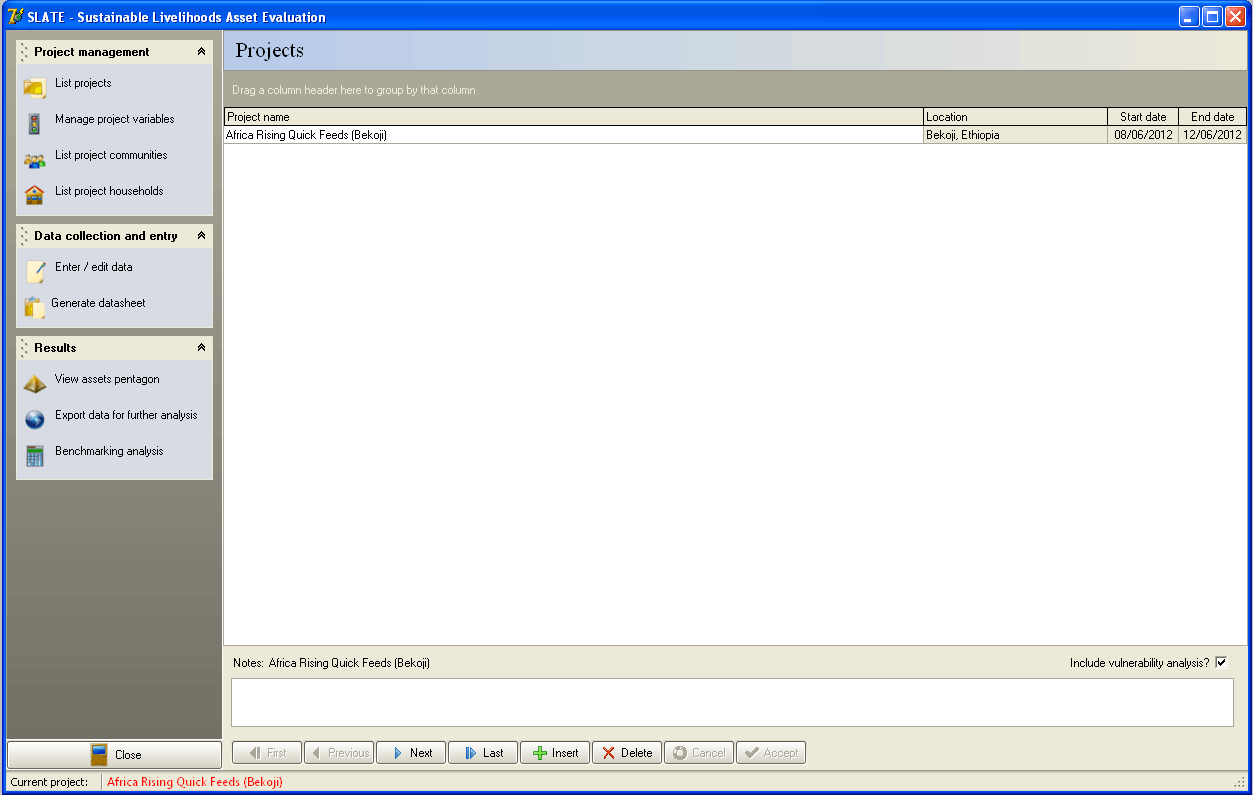
### Opening SLATE

To run the SLATE software package:

* Press the start button
* Select *All Programs*
* Select the *Slate* programme folder
* Select *Slate*

### The Slate User Interface

At startup, SLATE will display the user interface shown below on the page that shows a list of the existing SLATE projects for your installation:



### Basic User Interface Functions

The major sections of SLATE can be accessed through the hotlinks listed in the panel on the left hand side of the user interface. These links are divided into three main sections:

* *Project management*. This section allows the user to add, edit and delete SLATE projects including the variable definitions and details of the participating communities and households.
* *Data collection and entry*. Generate sheets for data recording – based on the project details entered above – and access the pages for entering individual household data into the system.
* *Results*. View summaries of the livelihood capital asset evaluations and the benchmarking data for individual households against. Raw data can also be downloaded to Excel or Access readable format for further analysis (e.g. for statistical trends or household stratification).

### Closing SLATE

To close SLATE:

* Click on the close button that is located below the hotlinks panel on the left hand side of the user interface:

Untitled-2.gif

### Data Handling With SLATE

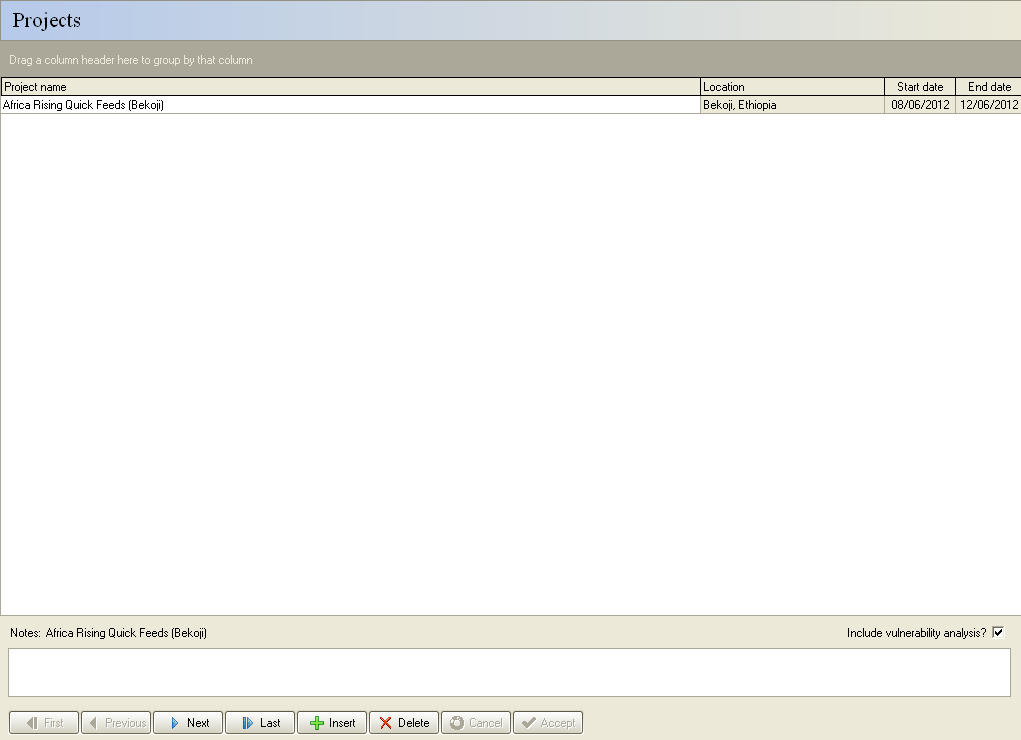
#### Basic Data Management

Wherever data can be manipulated with SLATE, the following buttons (or a subset of them) are used:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Navigation** |  | **Data manipulation** |
| 03_First_Button.gif | - go to the first record in the dataset | 07_Insert_Button.gif | - add a new record to the dataset |
| 04_Previous_Button.gif | - go to the previous record in the dataset | 08_Delete_Button.gif | - delete the current record |
| 05_Next_Button.gif | - go to the next record in the dataset | 09_Cancel_Button.gif | - cancel the changes that you have made |
| 06_Last_Button.gif | - go to the last record in the dataset | 10_Accept_Button.gif | - accept the changes that you have made |

### Listing and editing projects

The list of projects is the first screen to display when SLATE is opened:



If you wish to display the list of projects from elsewhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “List projects” hyperlink:

12_List_Projects_Link.gif

On this page, you can:

* Add a new project and enter its basic details;
* Edit the details for existing projects in the list;
* Delete any projects that you no longer require.

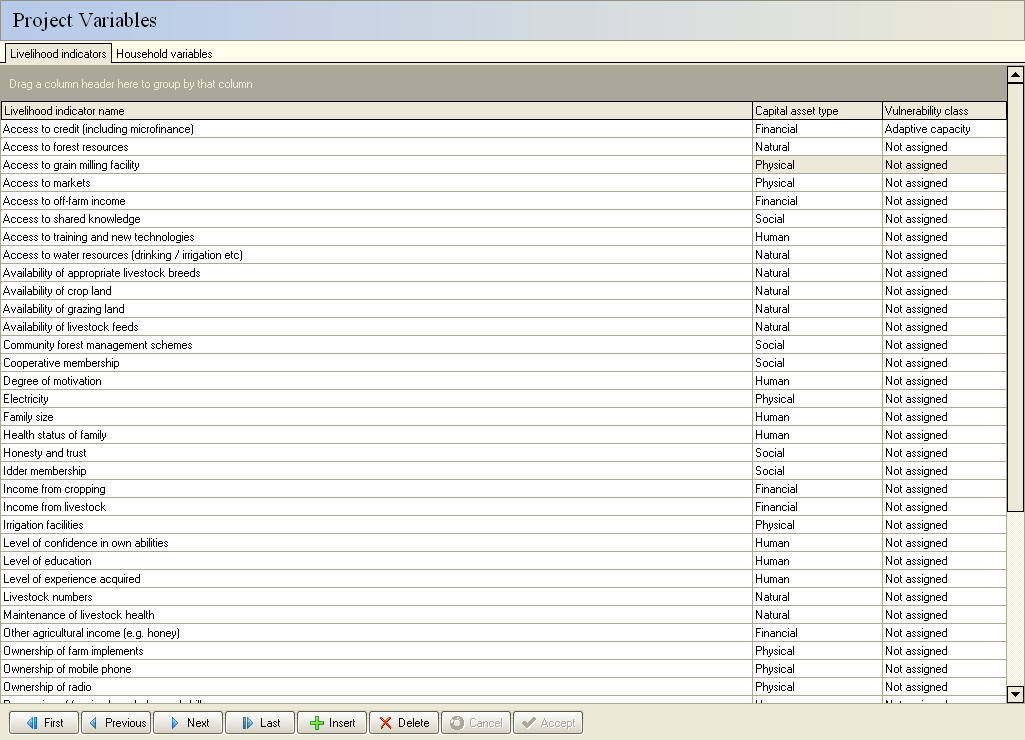
For each project in the list, you need to enter:

* A unique project name;
* A project location;
* A start date for the project data collection;
* An end date for the project data collection;
* Optional notes describing the project and its objectives.

In addition, you should also check the 13_Vulnerability_Analysis_Check.gif checkbox if you wish to collect data for evaluating participants’ perceptions of vulnerability.

### Managing Project Variables

SLATE project variables are managed via the “Project Variables” page:



To access the project variables from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “Mange project variables” hyperlink:

15_Manage_Variables_Link.gif

SLATE projects are based around a set of livelihoods capital asset indicators that are identified in consultation with key informants in the community [see process description]. The SLATE software also allows a set of quantitative biophysical / socio-economic “household” variables to be recorded to assist in later interpretation.

These variables are managed via the two tabs on the Project Variables Page:

* Add a new project and enter its basic details;
* Edit the details for existing projects in the list;
* Delete any projects that you no longer require.

#### Switching between Tabs

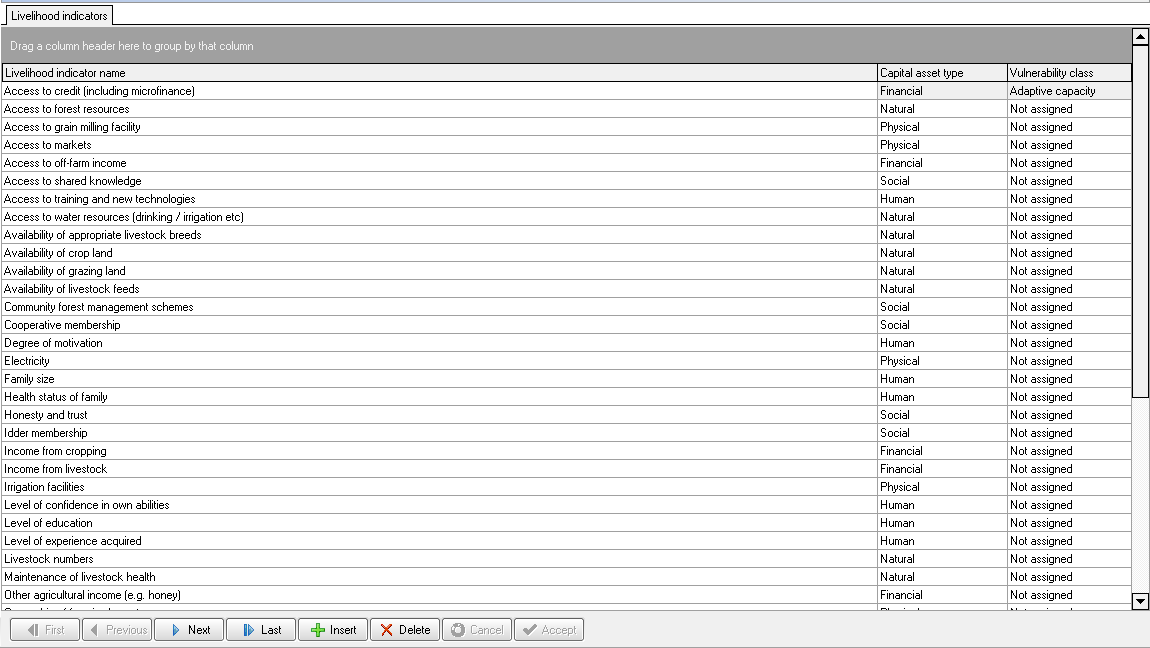
To switch between tabs:

* Select the tab for the pane of variables that you require:



#### Livelihood Indicators

The SLATE livelihoods indicators can be managed through the “Livelihood indicators” pane on the Project Variables page.



When you enter a new livelihood indicator, it will need:

* A unique name to identify it. This should be as descriptive as possible.
* To be assigned to one of the livelihood capital asset classes (Financial, Human, Natural, Physical, Social)



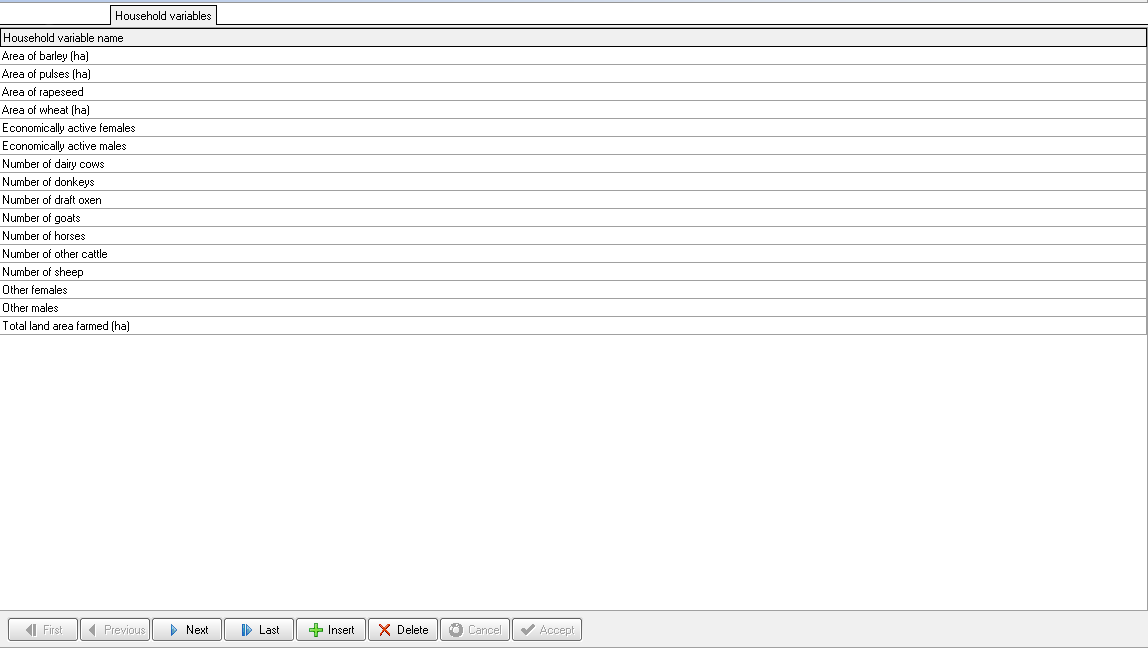
* If you will be conducting a vulnerability analysis, it should be assigned to the primary role that it plays in household vulnerability (Exposure, Severity, Adaptive capacity)



All of these attributes are editable at a later date if necessary.

#### Household Variables

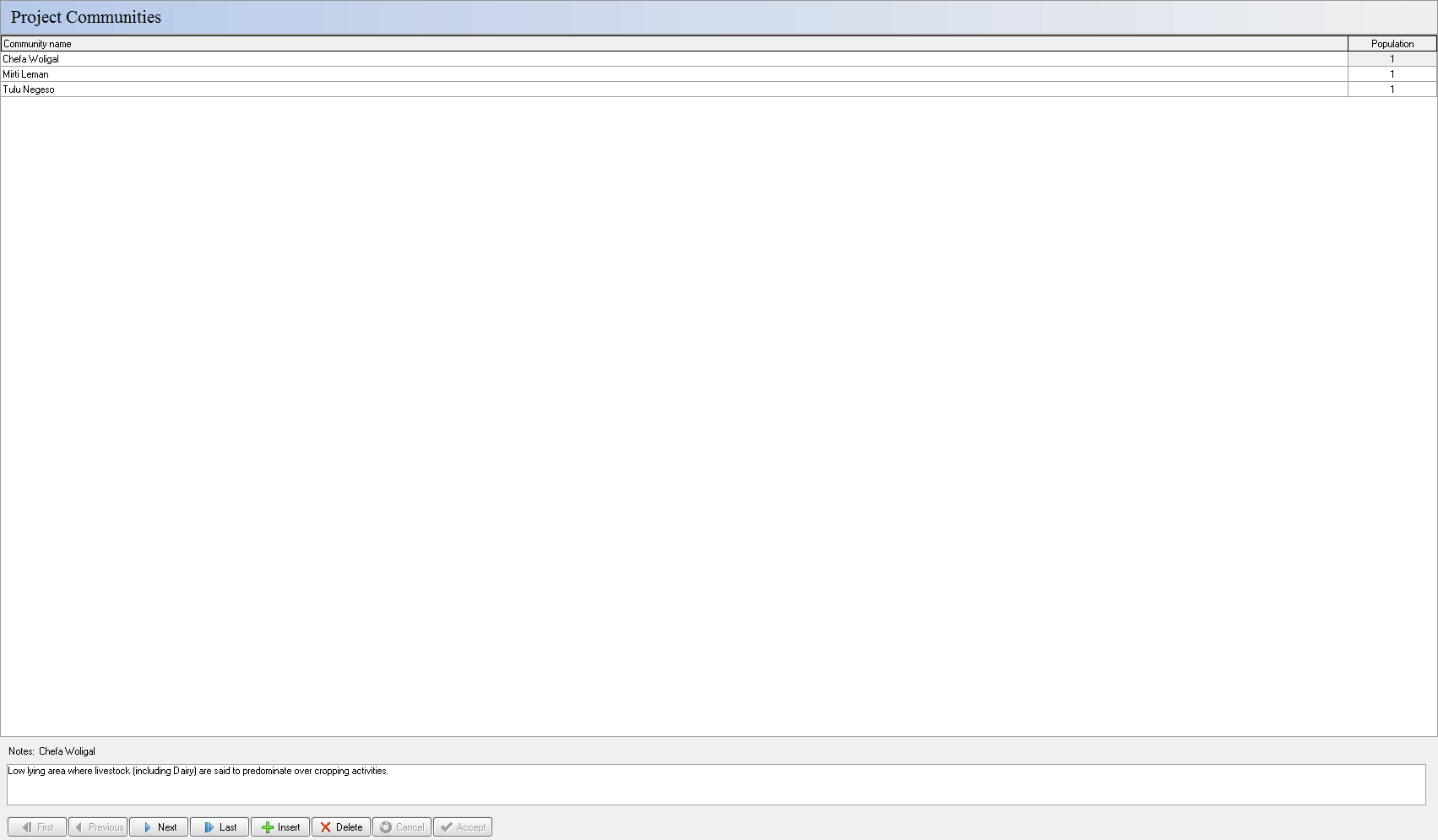
The SLATE household variables can be managed through the “Household variables” pane on the Project Variables page.



SLATE household variable are all numeric in the current implementation of the software. When you enter a new household variable it needs only a unique name to identify it.

### Project Communities

SLATE project communities are managed via the “Project Communites” page:



To access the project communities from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “List project communities” hyperlink:



Households participating in a SLATE analysis may be pre-stratified by community. This is useful if the area that you are working in already has clearly-defined geographically or socially dispersed groups. Defining communities in the analysis allows you to:

* Test whether there are differences amongst communities in terms of livelihood circumstances and strategies.
* Test whether the communities you have defined are the best way of stratfifying households in the study area or whether other stratifications are better for identifying groups with similar livelihood situations.

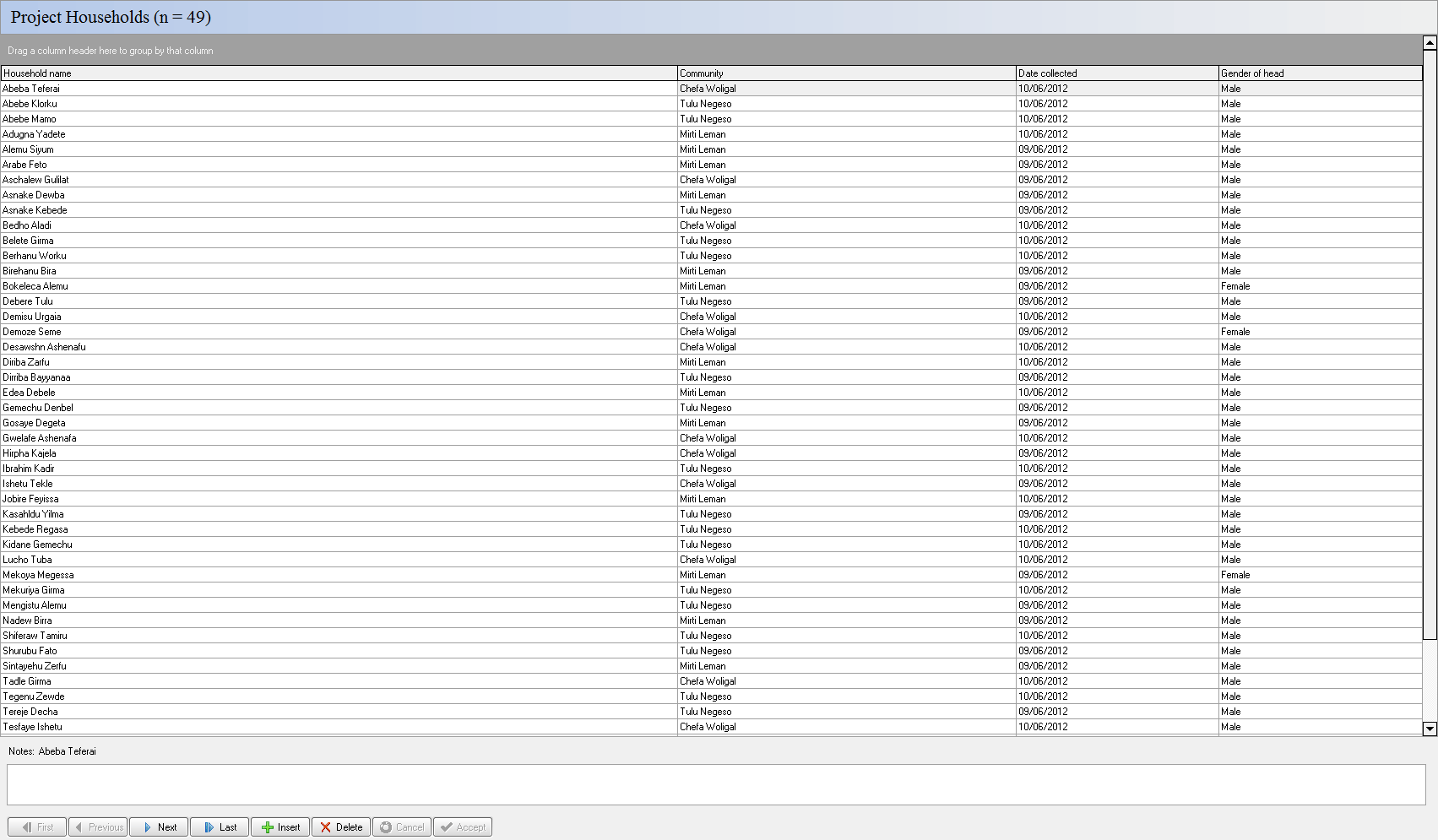
NOTE: Even if you are not stratifying by community, a SLATE analysis requires at least one community to be defined.

If you need to store population data for future reference SLATE allows you to do so at the community level:



### Project Households

The households participating in a SLATE project analysis are managed via the “Project Households” page:



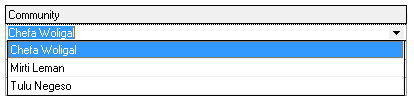
To access the project households from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “List project households” hyperlink:

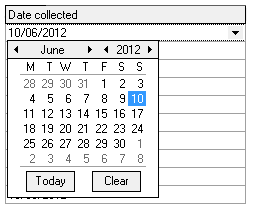


When you add a new project household, you will need to:

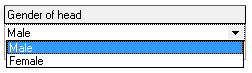
* Define a unique name to identify it. This is usually the name of the household head.
* Assign it to one of the communities that you have previously defined for the project



* Enter the date on which the data are collected. You can add this at a later time if the data collection has not already been completed

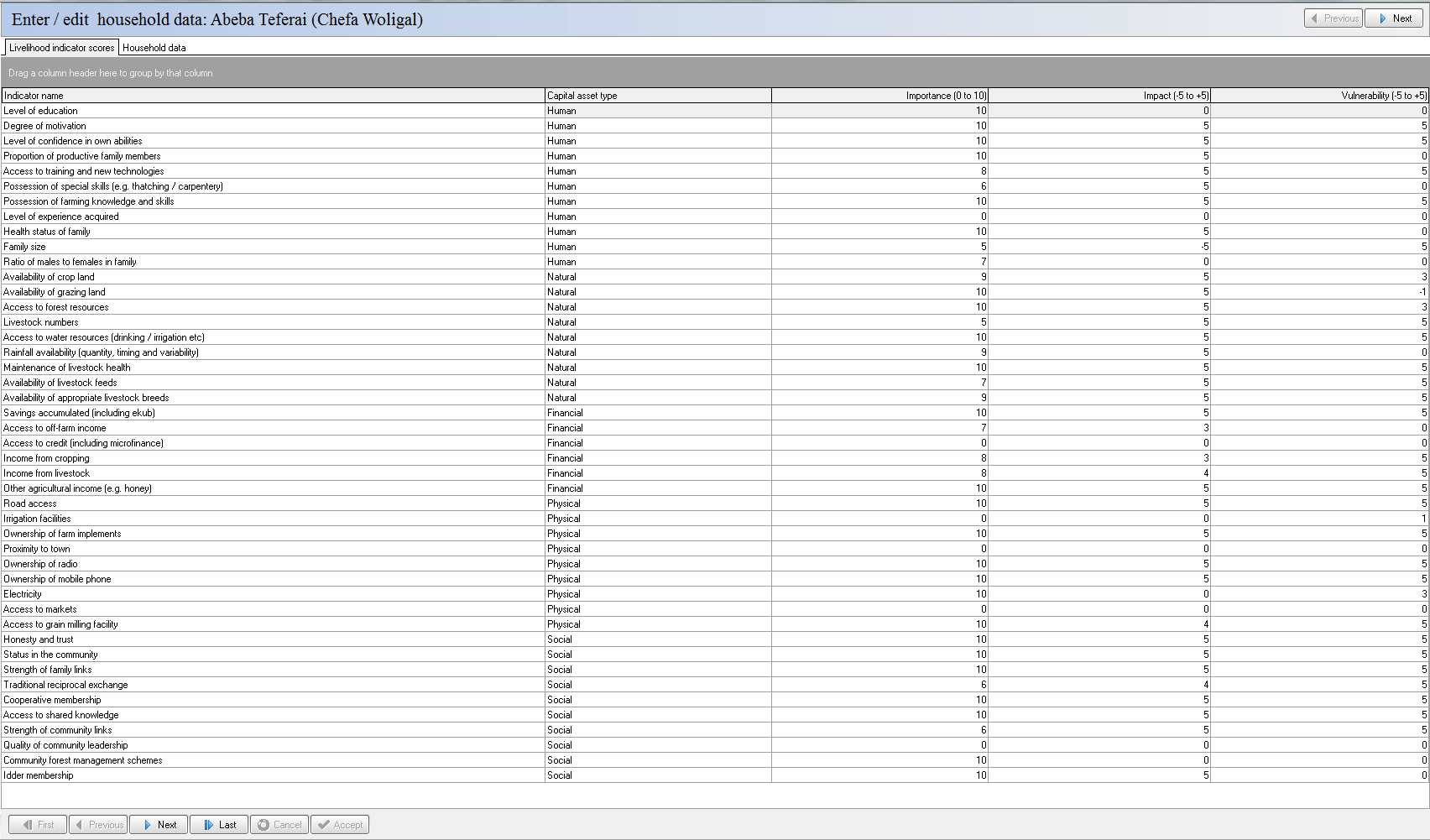


* Select the gender of the head of household



### Entering and Editing Data

The household data collected for a SLATE project analysis are entered and edited via the panes on the “Enter / edit household data” page:



To access the data entry and editing panes from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “Enter / edit data” hyperlink:



Each household has its own page. You can scroll back and forwards through households using the previous and next buttons on the top right hand side of the “Enter / edit household data” page



#### Switching between Tabs

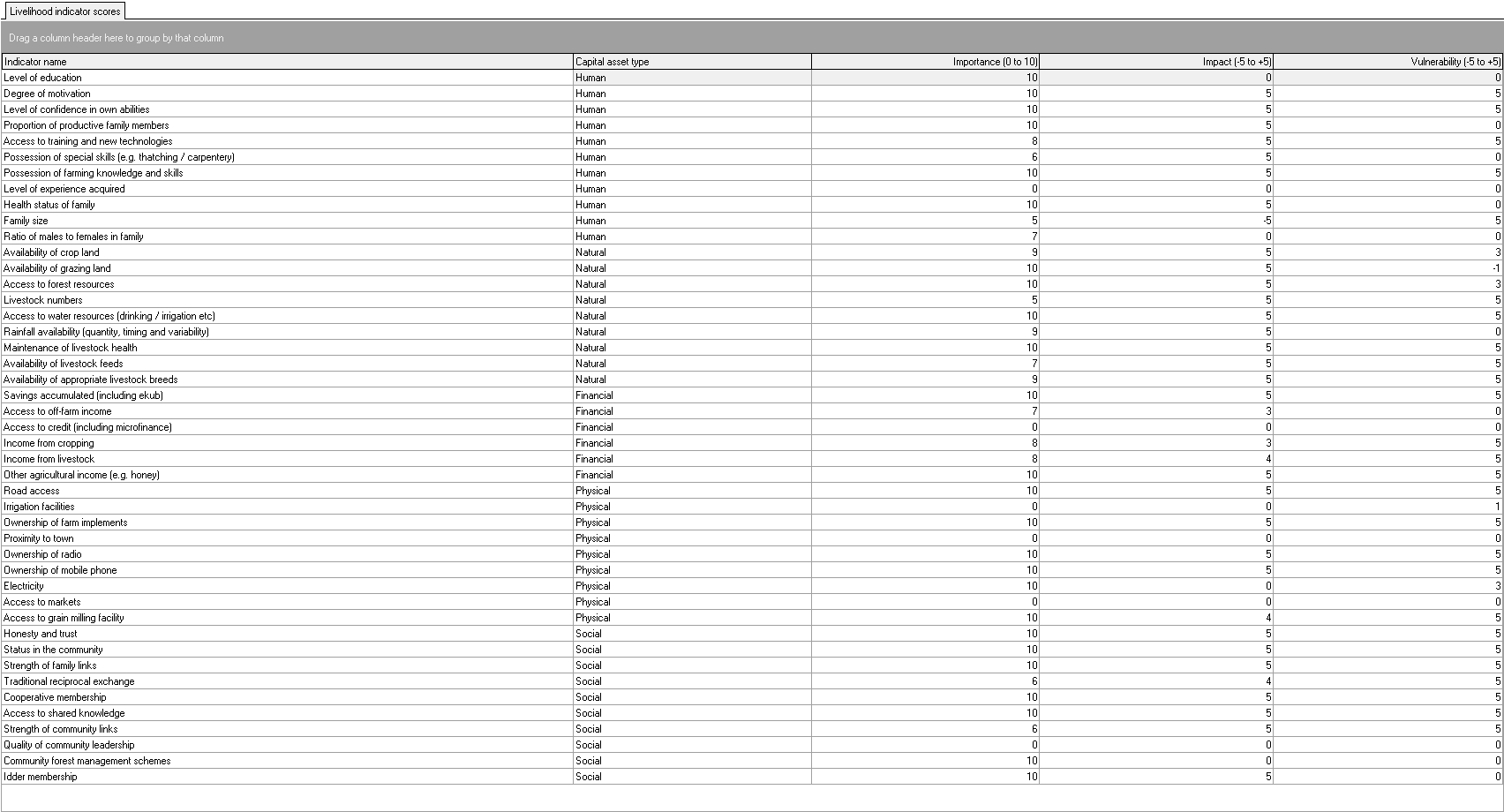
To switch between the input panes for the livelihood indicators and the household variables:

* Select the tab for the pane of variables that you require:



#### Entering data for the Livelihoods Indicators

The SLATE livelihoods indicator data can be entered and edited through the “Livelihood indicator scores” pane on the “Enter / edit household data” page.



Each indicator needs to be scored for:

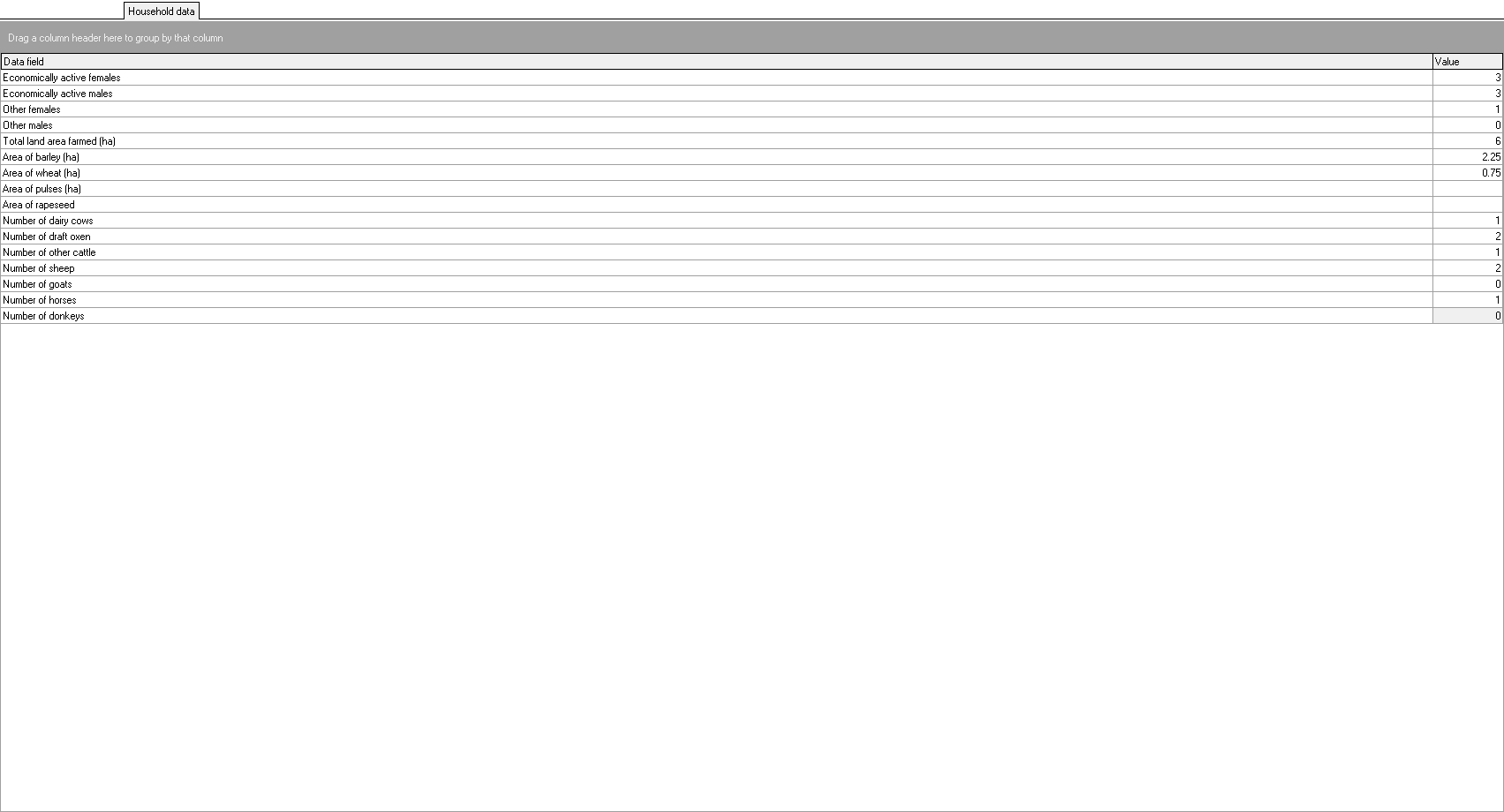
* Importance (on a scale of 0 to 10)
* Impact (on a scale of -5 to +5)
* Vulnerability (on a scale of -5 to +5)

These scorings are described in more detail in the description of the SLATE process in section ?.?.

If you need to edit the indicator name or capital asset type then this should be done through the ”Project variables” page as described above.

#### Entering data for the Household Variables

The SLATE household variable data can be entered and edited through the “Household variables” pane on the “Enter / edit household data” page.



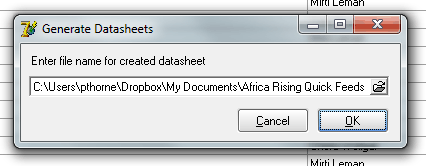
### Generating Datasheets

After you have defined your SLATE project, you can use the software to produce a data collection *pro forma* in MS Word readable format:

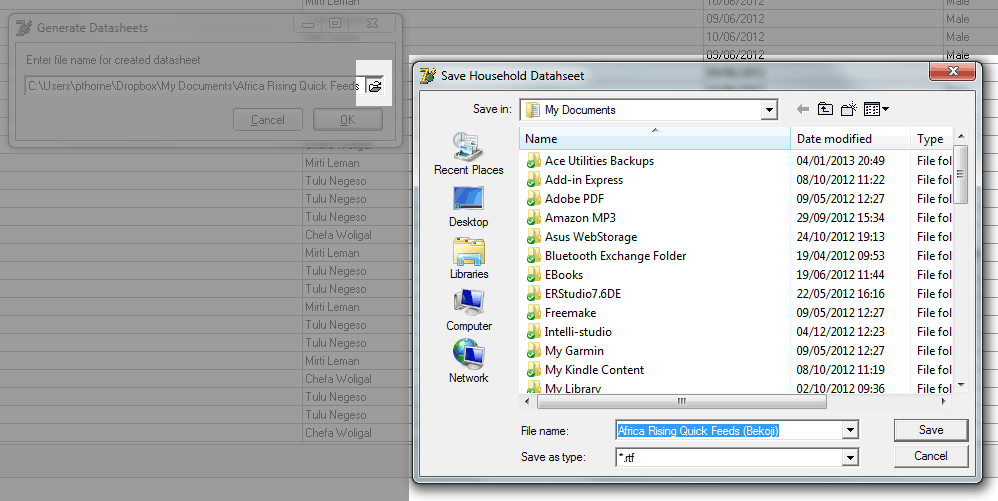
* Click on the “Generate Datasheet” hyperlink



* EITHER accept the suggested file name and location (the default location is the “My Documents” folder on your computer) by clicking on the OK button in the dialog that appears



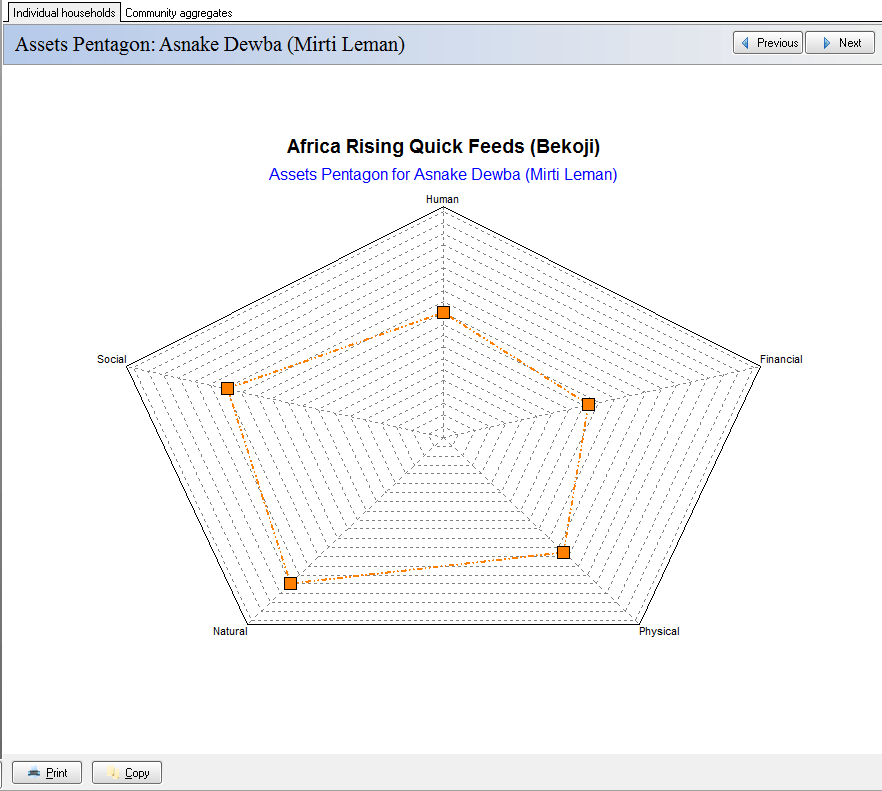
* OR save to an alternative location by clicking on the “Save file” icon by the current filename to open a “File save” dialog.



When you have saved the file generated will be displayed in your default word processing software package from where it can be edited (if required) and printed.

### Livelihoods Asset Pentagons

SLATE can generate a set of livelihoods asset pentagons to give the user a quick overview of the areas in which households and communities may differ. These may be viewed on the panes of the “Assets pentagon” page.



To access the assets pentagon panes from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “View assets pentagon” hyperlink:



#### Switching between Panes

To switch between the pentagons for the individual households and those that are aggregated for project communities:

* Select the tab for the type of pentagon that you require:



Each household (on the “Individual households” pane) and each community (on the “Community aggregates” pane) has its own pentagon. You can scroll back and forwards through pentagons using the previous and next buttons on the top right hand side of the “Enter / edit household data” pane



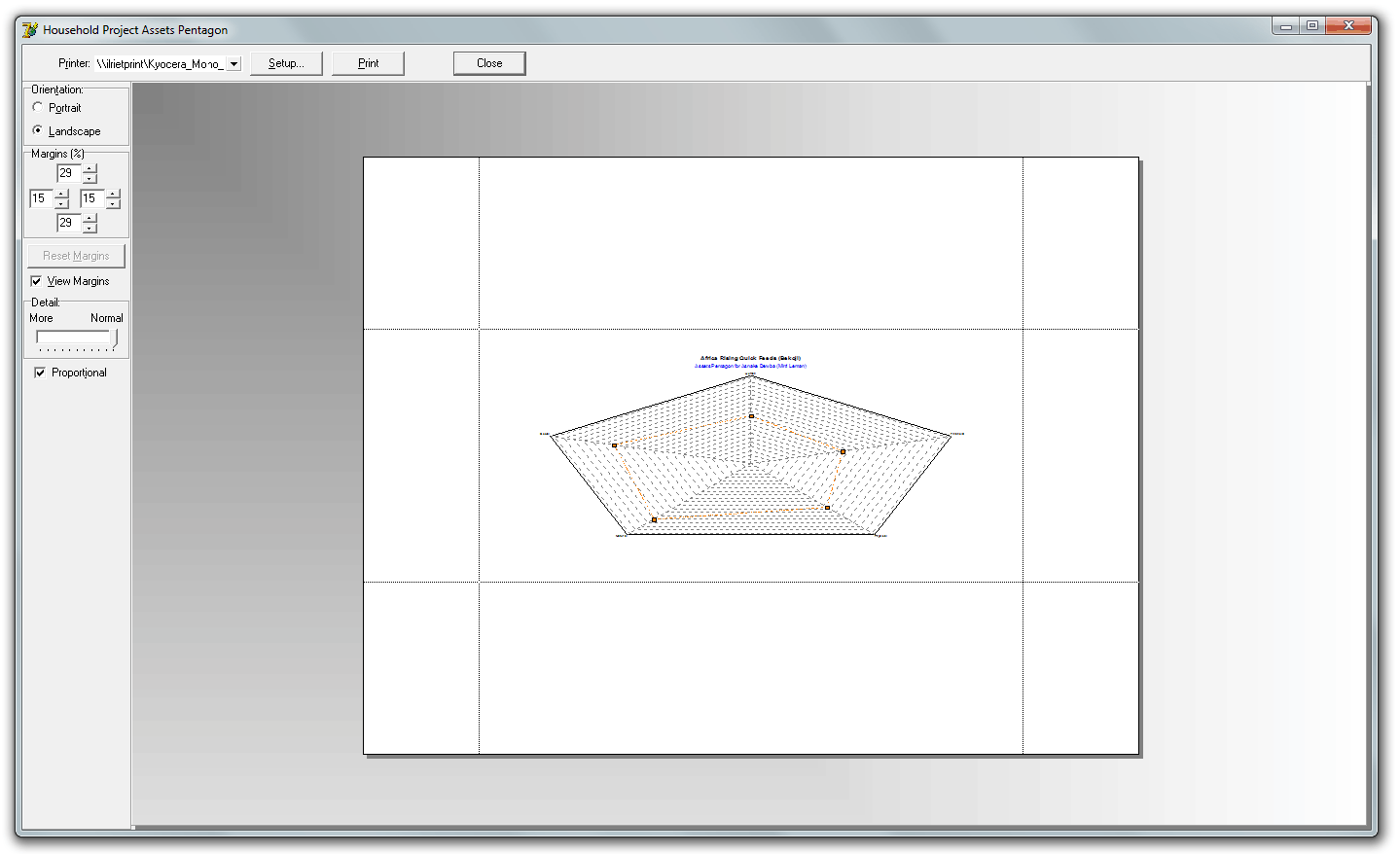
#### Printing a Pentagon

Pentagons can be printed directly from the SLATE software:

* Press the “Print” button located at the bottom left hand side of the pentagon pane.



* In the preview dialog that appears, make any changes that you require to the layout of the printed page and press the dialog’s “Print” button when you are ready.



#### Copying a Pentagon

You can also copy an image of the pentagon so that it can be inserted directly into reports or other presentations:

* Press the “Copy” button located at the bottom left hand side of the pentagon pane.



* An image of the pentagon will now be available when you use the “Paste” command in the document or presentation that you are working on.

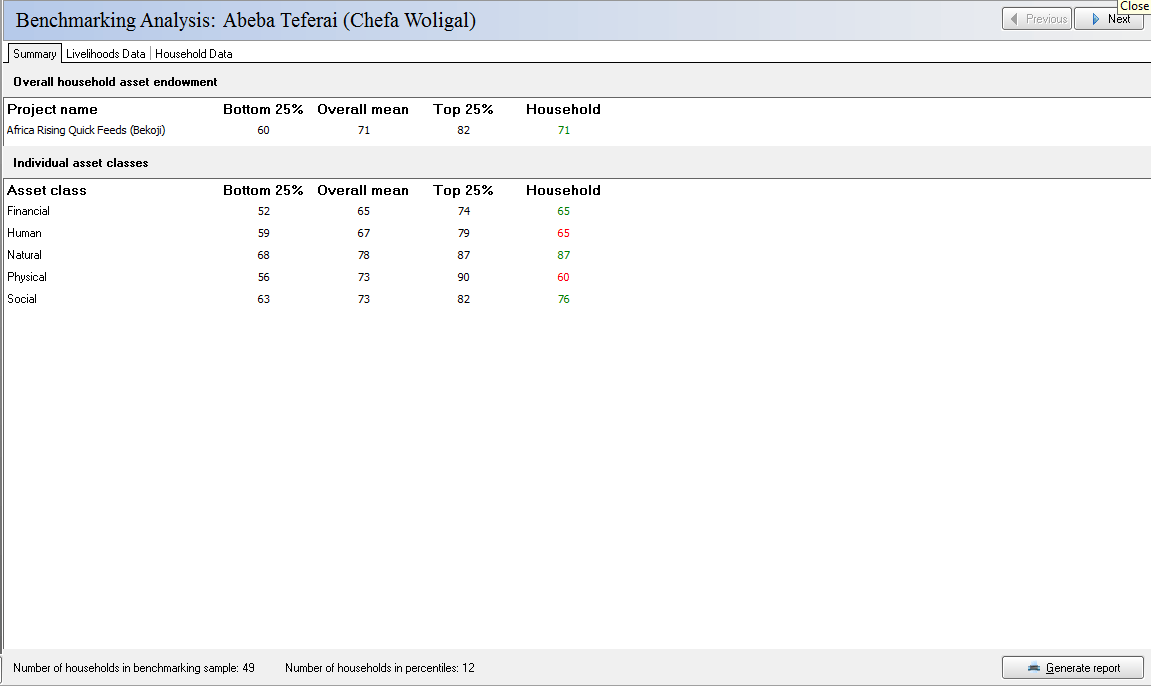
### Exporting SLATE Data

Further analysis and interpretation of the results of a SLATE analysis can be carried out using other software packages (spreadsheets, SLATE also includes a feature to export data in a format that is compatible with most of these programmes (comma separated variable; .csv)

### Benchmarking

SLATE generates benchmarking data for each project and, for comparative purposes, each individual household. The driving variable for the benchmarking exercise is a composite livelihoods status which is the mean asset score across all indicators. Comparison of the household score for each indicator with the top 25 per cent, overall mean and bottom 25% (as defined by composite livelihood status) forms a basis for identifying the areas in which households are performing well or less effectively.

The benchmarking results may be viewed on the panes of the “Benchmarking analysis” page.



To access the assets pentagon panes from anywhere in the SLATE user interface:

* Click on the “Benchmarking analysis” hyperlink:



#### Switching between Panes

To switch between the outputs of the benchmarking analysis:

* Select the tab for the type of level of detail that you require:



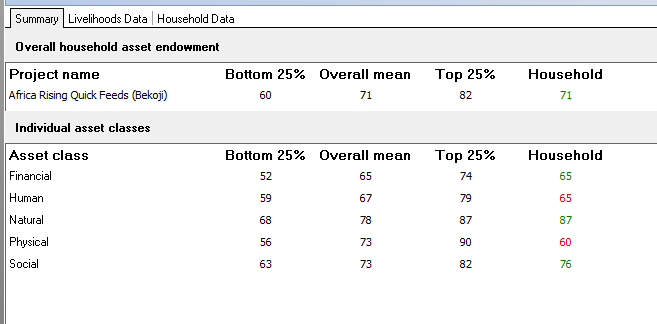
The first tab displays a summary of the livelihoods capital assets while the second and third tabs give more detail on the livelihoods indicators and household variables respectively.

Each household has its own benchmarking analysis. You can scroll back and forwards through households using the previous and next buttons on the top right hand side of the “Benchmarking analysis” pane



### Summary Data

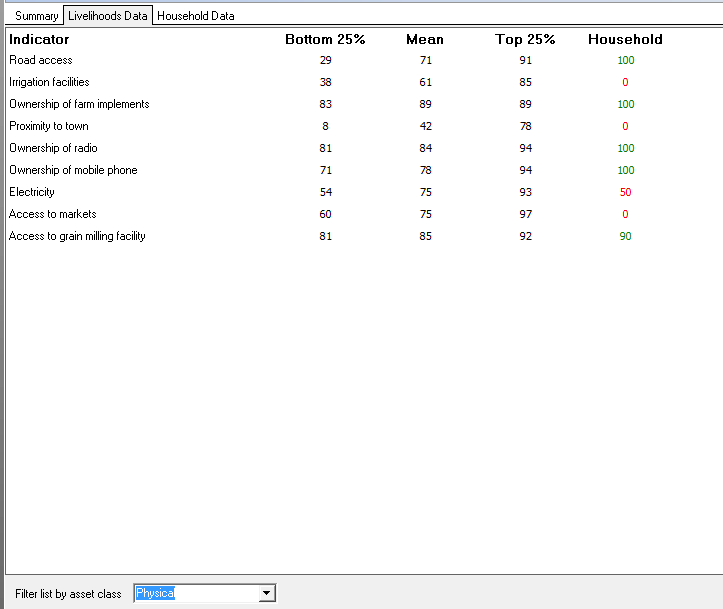
The benchmarking summary data pane displays an overview of the overall livelihood status and the statuses for the individual capital asset classes.



All household benchmarking data are colour coded green or red. A green value in the “Household” column indicates that the value for the household is at least average for the benchmarking sample. A value that is red indicates that the household is below average for this asset class. The reasons for the poor performance can be explored in more depth by studying the individual indicators that contribute to the overall asset class scores (see below).

### Livelihoods Data

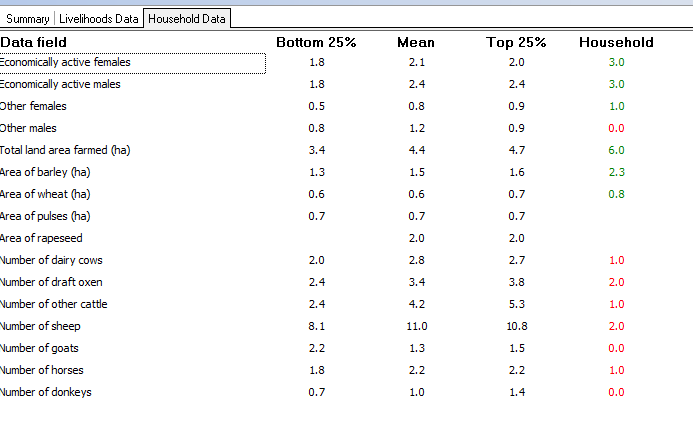
The livelihoods data pane displays the data for the individual livelihoods indicators:



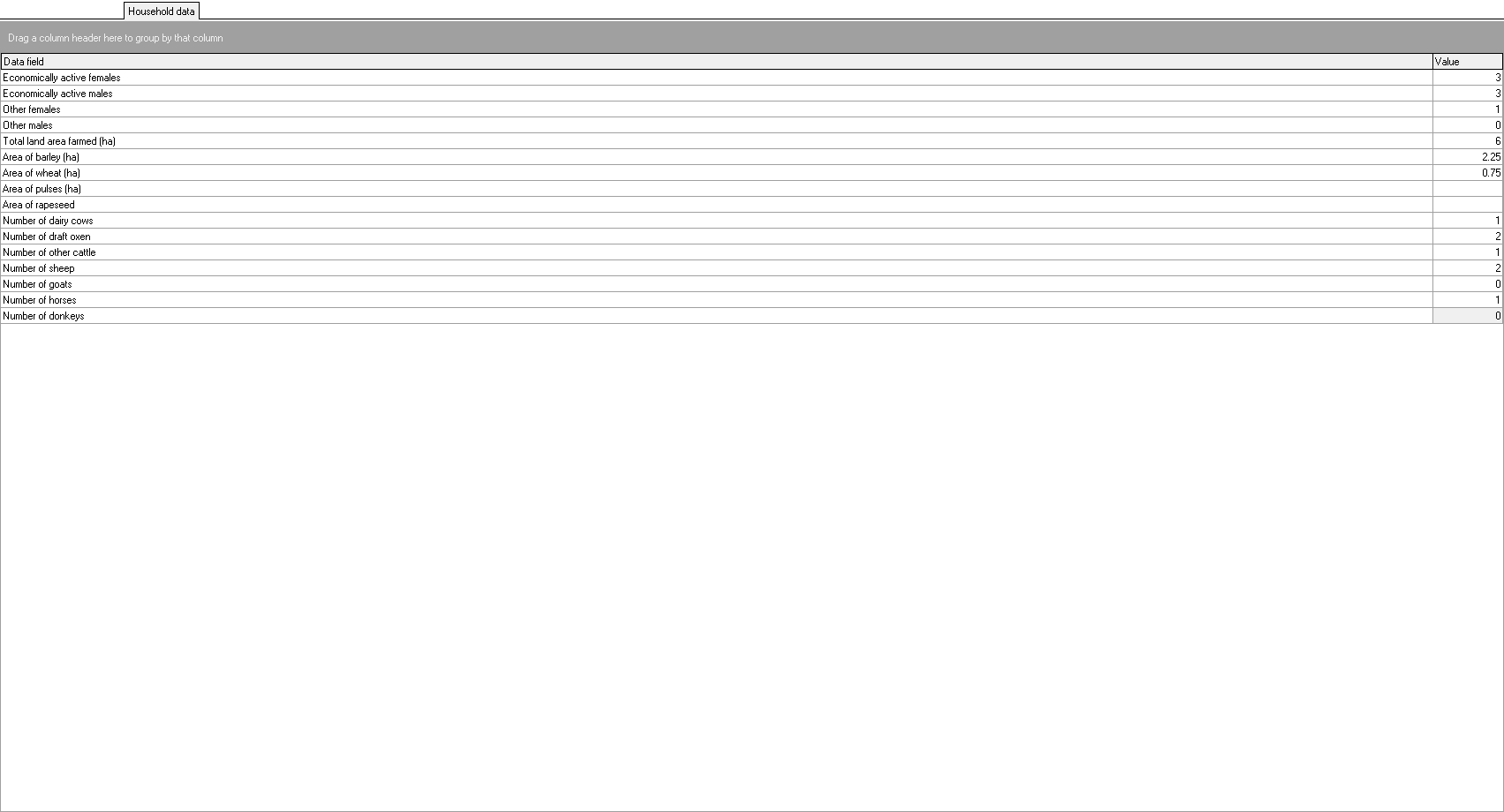
The entire list of indicators may be displayed or, for improved clarity, the list may be filtered by livelihoods capital asset type. In the example above, the reasons for this households lower physical capital asset endowments start to become apparent.

### Households Data

Benchmarks for the basic quantitative household data are displayed on the Households data pane:



A well selected set of quantitative household indicators can to explain further the reasons underlying good or poor performance in terms of livelihood indicators.



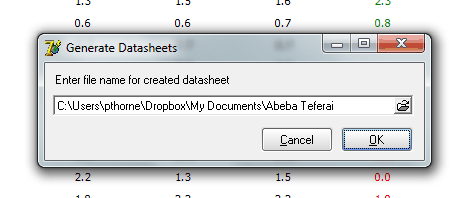
### Generating a Report

The SLATE software allows you to produce the benchmarking report in a form that can be used to prepare hard copies:

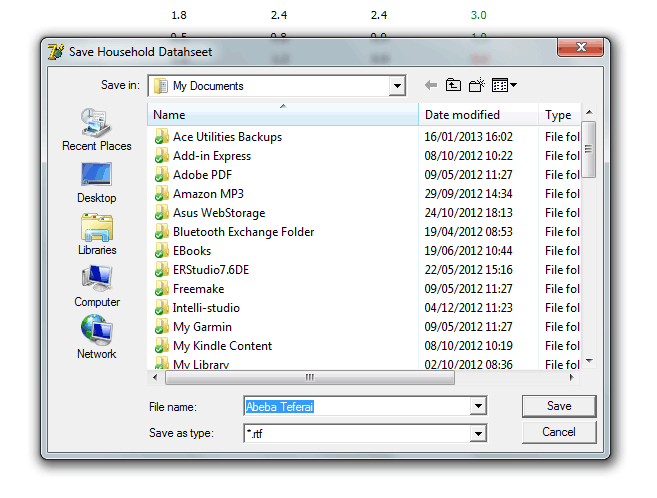
* Click on the “Generate Report” button



* EITHER accept the suggested file name and location (the default location is the “My Documents” folder on your computer) by clicking on the OK button in the dialog that appears



* OR save to an alternative location by clicking on the “Save file” icon by the current filename to open a “File save” dialog.



When you have saved the file generated will be displayed in your default word processing software package from where it can be edited (if required) and printed.

## Some Guidelines on Further Analysis of SLATE Datasets

The SLATE function to export the data gathered delivers your dataset in a raw form. Furhter manipulation and analysis can make a lot more of the data available.

### Protocol for tidying Data in Excel (or another spreadsheet)

### Guidance on Stratification using PCA / Cluster analysis